

Write for the Heights Contest 2012
Category: Poetry by Youth
Poem title: Life through my Looking-Glass

By Helena Duncan, age 17

I want vintage, I want
tacky costume jewelry in quaint shops with French names I can't pronounce
and pink polka dotted awnings.
I want the smell of copper pennies worn with time, the shine of
linoleum on busy hotel plaza floors.
I want Indie bands at full blast
and the taste of mocha in the security
of that small, cutesy café down the street
whose coffee is overpriced.
I want chilly air in just my nightgown,
neon eye shadows applied
haphazardly on city bus routes,
the classiness of haughty country clubs
and pristine white tennis skirts
and the window shopping on quirky
Main Streets, scented candles and
cinnamon buns with too many raisins.
I need charcoal smudges against my fingers and
animated bluebirds in children's movies,
watching couples kiss on park benches
and hearing the television from my neighbor's
apartment when I can't sleep anyway.
I want suede, cotton, barefooted through dewy
grass before dawn, pull a sweater over my shoulders
at sunset and think of his eyes, his worn out jeans,
and cook a home-made meal, genuine,
like I ought to.
I need the sounds of police cars when I'm safe inside,
and doves and the squeak of sneakers on tile,
erasers to remind me of junior high,
classic Coke bottles
and the fear of heartbreak and the
love of Love; the songs with lyrics I can't comprehend
and the parties that remind me why I like to get dressed up.
I like the old Victorian mansions
that my mother says have a thousand plumbing issues,
Alfred Hitchcock films
and historic Tin Lizzies on display in museums,
rough leather and soft lace and everything in between.

I need my laptop with me at Starbucks to fit in,
and my book of French poetry to stand out,
a smile, a nod, a first kiss done over again,
a million grains of sand in an hourglass the size of
Manhattan, the feel of that sand underneath my toes.
I need emerald lake waters with the reflection of
skyscrapers, beaded moccasins, the face of my grandfather
when I was only a child, chipped baby blue nail polish
and two-hour-long phone calls and underground concerts
and the smell of cologne,
lingering:
life.